

Report

Report to:	Community and Enterprise Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	29 August 2023
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Whitemoss Tennis Courts – East Kilbride
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ advise the Committee of the forthcoming upgrade of Whitemoss Tennis Courts in East Kilbride, fully funded by the Lawn Tennis Association via the Parks Renovation Fund award

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the forthcoming upgrade of Whitemoss Tennis Courts following a successful external funding bid of £92,814 to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) be noted; and
- (2) that the obligations on South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) with respect to the management and maintenance of the courts, as per the LTA funding criteria, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. In January 2022, SLC submitted an expression of interest to Tennis Scotland for funding from their £12 million Parks Renovation Fund. The Fund looks *'to improve the condition of parks across the country, improving playability, and helping implement sustainable operating models and activity to safeguard the future of tennis in parks for many generations to come'*.
- 3.2. Tennis Scotland appointed the LTA (the National Governing Body of Tennis in Great Britain) as park delivery partner to manage the Parks Investment Strategy and the Parks Renovation Fund.
- 3.3. A meeting was held in July 2022 with the LTA to discuss possible sites for the funding. It was confirmed that the 3 Whitemoss Tennis Courts in East Kilbride were the most suitable and SLC should progress an application. SLC had received several complaints about the condition of these courts, and they had attracted negative press for example., via Twitter (Andy and Judy Murray) and the Daily Record. South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) and SLC have undertaken limited investment in the courts, however, it was recognised that more significant investment is required for a long-term solution. A grant award from the Parks Renovation Fund would deliver an all-weather court surface and introduce a customer friendly booking system.

4. Stakeholder Consultation and Funding Eligibility

4.1. Stakeholder meetings were held to progress this project, with ongoing communication and consultation between the LTA, SLLC and Tennis Scotland on the fund's terms and conditions and SLC/SLLC's ability to meet the funding criteria as detailed below:-

- ◆ commit to use booking software called 'Clubspark' and SLLC to appear on the LTA court search website, 'LTA Rally'
- ◆ select and implement an operational model for court bookings and activities
- ◆ have a sustainability commitment to maintain the courts to a playable standard and have adequate funding for eventual resurfacing. Guideline for fund is £1200 per court per year for 15 years
- ◆ commit to having one hour per week of organised free tennis activity
- ◆ commit to recreational competition offer through local tennis leagues

4.2. SLC has committed to all these conditions and the LTA have approved the Council's feasibility costs and operational model.

4.3. SLLC, in conjunction with Tennis Scotland, have produced a draft timetable for play which incorporates free tennis and a commitment to recreational competition offer.

4.4. A requirement of the funding award was the signing of the Grant Funding Agreement by SLC by 31 July 2023. The Agreement has been reviewed by Legal and Procurement Services and has now been signed off via SLC's Standing Orders. This report is, therefore, for noting.

5. Customer Journey

5.1. At present, staff at the John Wright Sports Centre are responsible for routine checking and responding to any issues. As stated above, however, SLLC and SLC have been able to undertake only limited investment (new linage and a new layer of cresta) and this has only allowed for the courts to be playable over the summer period.

5.2. Part of the funding criteria is that the tennis courts should be a 'stand-alone' facility and not part of a sports centre or SLLC membership; hence the requirement for individuals to create an account on the LTA website which provides access to an online booking system, Clubspark.

5.3. On the booking of a court via Clubspark, the service-user will be provided with a pin number, which will provide access to the court through the gate system. Should the user experience any issues at the gate, signage will be available providing options on how to resolve this.

6. Tennis Playing, Schedule and Pricing

6.1. The LTA funding criteria stipulates that there should be a mixture of 'pay to play', 'freeplay', and coached activity available. It is intended that income generated from the 'pay to play' will be used to sustain the courts' condition over their lifespan.

6.2. Prices will be set in line with SLLC's pricing policy for tennis provision, and SLLC have agreed to oversee the operation of the tennis courts and collection of income.

6.3. SLLC has drafted an initial schedule of play, however, this schedule will be reviewed to ensure it is both responding to booking patterns and maintaining the commitment to free play and coaching activity. At the moment, the draft schedule includes 28

hours of free play per week during the spring/summer season, April to September, and 21 hours per week during the autumn/winter season, October to March.

- 6.4. This project will give the tennis courts at Whitemoss a welcome new lease of life, helping many more people to pick up a racket, get active, and enjoy all the physical and mental health benefits that tennis provides.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. Implementation of the booking system will require staff input, however, this can be achieved through existing resources.

8. Financial Implications/Opportunities

- 8.1. General maintenance costs and repairs to the courts will be covered by the revenue generated from pay to play.
- 8.2. On the successful implementation of the courts, there is an option to introduce season passes for a family which potentially could be more cost-effective for regular players and increase income for SLC.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. Having low carbon facilities within South Lanarkshire communities is linked to the objectives of the council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy (SDCCS). One of the global sustainable development goals which is supported by the council's SDCCS is: Providing communities with safe and accessible sports facilities promotes good health and wellbeing.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1 The successful upgrade of the tennis courts aligns with SLLC's vision for 'healthier, happier, more connected lives', and the Council's vision to 'improve the lives and prospects of everyone in South Lanarkshire'.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangement

- 11.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

David Booth

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

7 August 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

Values

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs

Priorities

- ◆ We will work to put people first and reduce inequality
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve

Outcomes

- ◆ Our children and young people thrive
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities
- ◆ People live the healthiest lives possible
- ◆ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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